

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:
 - allowing primary bidders to each place a primary bid for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string; and
 - allowing a secondary bidder to selectively place a secondary bid to augment the primary bid of a primary bidder by a monetary amount.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the primary bid is expressed as a price-per-action that the primary bidder is willing to pay for a particular action.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing more than one secondary bidder to selectively place a secondary bid to augment the primary bid of the primary bidder.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising determining an order in which the associated advertisement of each primary bidder is to be displayed on the results page is based on a combination of the primary bidder and each secondary bid associated therewith.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein each secondary bid augments the primary bid only for a defined time period.

7. A method, comprising:

receiving a plurality of primary bids, each from a primary bidder, for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string;

receiving at least one secondary bid, each from a secondary bidder, to augment a primary bid of a selected primary bidder by a monetary amount;

determining the total bid for each primary bidder by combining the primary bid of the primary bidder and each associated secondary bid; and

determining an order in which to include the associated advertisements of the primary bidders within the results page based at least in part on the total bid for the primary bidder.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the primary bids are expressed as a price-per-action that each primary bidder is willing to pay for a particular action.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein determining the order is also based on an indication of how frequently the associated advertisement is viewed by a person performing the search.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising receiving more than one secondary bid.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein each secondary bid comprises a temporal component that specifies a time period for which the selected primary bid is to be augmented.

13. A computer-readable medium, having stored thereon a sequence of instructions which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a method, comprising:

allowing primary bidders to each place a primary bid for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string; and

allowing a secondary bidder to selectively place a secondary bid to augment the primary bid of a primary bidder by a monetary amount.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the primary bid is expressed as a price-per-action that the primary bidder is willing to pay for a particular action.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.

16. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a sequence of instructions which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a method, comprising:

receiving a plurality of primary bids, each from a primary bidder, for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string;

receiving at least one secondary bid, each from a secondary bidder, to augment a primary bid of a selected primary bidder by a monetary amount;

determining the total bid for each primary bidder by combining the primary bid of the primary bidder and each associated secondary bid; and

determining an order in which to include the associated advertisements of the primary bidders within the results page based at least in part on the total bid for the primary bidder.

17. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the primary bids are expressed as a price-per-action that each primary bidder is willing to pay a particular action.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.

19. A system, comprising:
- a processor; and
 - a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor cause the processor to perform a method, comprising:
 - allowing primary bidders to each place a primary bid for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string; and
 - allowing a secondary bidder to selectively place a secondary bid to augment the primary bid of a primary bidder by a monetary amount.
20. The system of claim 19, wherein the primary bid is expressed as a price-per-action that the primary bidder is willing to pay for a particular action.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.
22. A system, comprising:
- a processor; and
 - a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor cause the processor to perform a method, comprising:

receiving a plurality of primary bids, each from a primary bidder, for displaying an associated advertisement within a results page of a search based on a search string;

receiving at least one secondary bid, each from a secondary bidder, to augment a primary bid of a selected primary bidder by a monetary amount;

determining the total bid for each primary bidder by combining the primary bid of the primary bidder and each associated secondary bid; and

determining an order in which to include the associated advertisements of the primary bidders within the results page based at least in part on the total bid for the primary bidder.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the primary bids are expressed as a price-per-action that each primary bidder is willing to pay for a particular action.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the particular action is selected from the group consisting of a cost-per-acquisition, a cost-per-lead, and a cost-per-click.

25. The system of claim 22, wherein determining the order is also based on an indication of how frequently the associated advertisement is viewed by a person performing the search.

26. The system of claim 22, further comprising receiving more than one secondary bid.